

# CITY OF SURPRISE

## Communications Policy



### Purpose

The City of Surprise exists to serve the public. Communication - the giving or exchanging of information - is central to that mission. This policy is intended as a guideline to cultivate open, honest, effective communication with the City's various publics in order to nurture better understanding and support of City goals, programs and services.

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## **Key Publics**

**Citizens.** Our highest priority are the citizens of Surprise - those who live work and play here - who benefit from our services, elect our leaders and influence our future and policies. We must make every effort to comprehend the needs and expectations of our residents and, in turn, employ every avenue (media, newsletter, flyers, brochures, web sites, area managers, community meetings) to keep them informed of what we're doing and why.

**Opinion Leaders.** Whether in an official or unofficial role, it is important to recognize that certain citizens possess a sphere of influence. City leaders are encouraged to establish and regularly update a list of current opinion leaders, then make every effort to ensure those leaders clearly understand the issues and are armed with facts.

**Employees.** More than 700 employees form the City of Surprise government. Until we are "all on the same page" we cannot accurately communicate to our citizens. Lack of information leads to misunderstanding, therefore it is essential that administration, departments and elected officials proactively share pertinent information with each other. Employees are encouraged to use Department meetings, monthly gatherings with the City Manager, e-mail, and the employee newsletter, "The Inside Scoop," to address concerns or disseminate information.

**News Media.** The media is neither an ally nor an adversary, but a resource. Through newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet, the City has a powerful platform to inform, instruct and influence public opinion - we need to take full advantage of it. If we're doing our jobs right and communicating with the media effectively, there's nothing to fear. Conversely, the media often serves as an excellent source of information and gauge of public opinion.

**Elected Officials.** As the local government, we have an obligation to act as watchdogs on behalf of residents and to fully inform our state and national elected officials on how particular issues may impact the quality of life in Surprise.

**West Valley Cities and Other Arizona Governments.** We encourage a spirit of cooperation, not competition, by openly sharing information with other cities and banding together to find "win-win" solutions on topics of mutual interest.

**Dysart Unified and Other School Districts.** Because schools are an integral part of the quality of life in Surprise, it is essential City government keep abreast of developments within the schools and offer information and assistance when possible.

## **Guiding Principles**

Because the City of Surprise exists to serve the public, we are accountable to them. Therefore, the City of Surprise maintains an “open door policy” regarding the public’s right to know, examine and question the inner workings of government. When dealing with the public, keep the following guidelines in mind:

**Be perceptive.** Listen first; then speak. It is important the City take time to listen to and understand the concerns of its constituents. Then those concerns may be more accurately addressed.

**Be proactive.** It is difficult to correct misinformation. That’s why it’s important to communicate before acting, if possible, anticipating and answering questions and concerns before they arise.

**Be positive.** Whether deserved or not, it’s important to realize government is usually suspect and criticism is a constant. While we don’t deny there are positives and negatives to every issue, our communications should be tailored to the positive resolution of community problems and concerns.

**Be plain.** Speak in terms the average citizen would understand. The use of technical jargon may cause confusion or misunderstanding.

**Be prompt.** Return phone calls or e-mails daily. If more time is needed to gather a response, let the inquirer know when to expect an answer, then deliver. When responding to inquiries from the media ask, “When is your deadline?” then try to respect that deadline.

**Be professional.** Remember, whether on or off duty, you’re an ambassador of the City. Be polite and avoid arguing, finger pointing or use of foul language.

**Note: City employees are encouraged to contribute articles to professional publications and journals. Please inform the Communications Department concerning such accomplishments.**

## **Role of the Communications Department**

In general, the role of the Communications Department is to act as a clearinghouse for outgoing mass communications and as a consultant to other City departments on media-related issues. Our goal is not to censor, but to coordinate, clarify and ensure continuity in messages and publications issued by the City.

### **Communications Department Responsibilities**

1. Be aware of all activities in, and all actions of, the City.
2. Assist media in gaining information from department directors, City Council members, Commission and Advisory Board members and public records.
3. Track media coverage of City-related meetings, events and issues.
4. Coordinate press conferences to announce major City decisions or significant events. The Communications Director, after consultation with the City Manager, will make all necessary arrangements and contacts, and work with police and fire spokespersons when appropriate.
5. Approve **all** news releases prepared by City departments ***before*** distribution.
6. Release City reports, press releases, announcements, surveys and special studies simultaneously to appropriate news media representatives.

### **Role of Department Directors**

1. Keep the Communications Department informed of employee or department accomplishments, and items of human interest. Such stories promote positive public relations.
2. Ensure **all** news releases, documents, newsletters, and other informational materials created by department employees intended for public distribution are submitted to the Communications Department for review **prior** to printing or distribution.

### **Role of City employees:**

1. Notify the Communications Department of activities - positive or negative - that are likely to draw media interest.  
ALWAYS inform the Department Director and the Communications Department by telephone or e-mail when contacted by the media - especially regarding a controversial issue. All contacts to and from the news media must be channeled through the Communications Department prior to interview or the exchange of information. *Due to the nature of the job, Police and Fire need only inform the City Manager and Communications Director on major incidents or controversial issues.*
2. Recognize you may not be the most qualified person to address the media. Instead, direct media inquiries to the Communications Director or the Department Director, who will determine the employee most qualified to speak on a topic.
3. Respond in a timely manner to media inquiries. (The phrase, "City officials could not be reached for comment," may reinforce the impression the City is trying to hide something.)

## **Media Policy**

With the exception of executive sessions, media representatives may attend and report on actions taken by City Council, Planning & Zoning Commission, or any Advisory Board or Commission. Audio/video recording is allowed provided it does not disrupt the proceedings.

***Members of the news media must call the Communications Department to obtain information or request an interview.*** City employees should ALWAYS inform the Department Director and the Communications Director by telephone or e-mail when contacted by the news media. The Communications Director is available to City staff for professional advice and assistance in dealing with the news media. Our goal is to be prompt, professional, knowledgeable and accurate in responding to media inquiries.

## **City Media Relations Objectives**

1. Use the media as a resource.
2. Anticipate, identify and monitor major newsworthy issues.
3. Foster cooperation between City government and the media.
4. Ensure information released accurately represents the City.

## **Guidelines for Media Interviews**

Information provided to the media should reflect City management's interpretation of City Council policy and ***not the employee's personal views***. Furthermore, employees should not guess or speculate about City policy. Employees may request a representative from the Communications Department to attend the interview. For more information, see Addendum One, "Tips for Media Interviews."

## **Communications Law**

With few exceptions, state and federal Freedom of Information laws require government information to be released to the media and public when requested. Some general exceptions are:

- ❑ Personnel records. Certain portions of personnel records may be protected from disclosure. Check with Human Resources Department for clarification.
- ❑ Pending litigation. Do not respond to media inquiries involving City litigation, or offer legal opinions on City policies or activities.
- ❑ Juvenile records and victim's names.
- ❑ Minutes of an executive session.
- ❑ Details of a crime. Information may be withheld if revelation would jeopardize investigation or prosecution of a criminal matter.
- ❑ The federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) prohibits City employees from disclosing an individual's personally identifiable health information. City employees must protect Protected Health Information relating to another person's past, present or future physical or mental health condition, as well as the provision of healthcare or the payment for healthcare. Thus, the following information regarding an individual should not be released without a signed authorization on the approved authorization form:

1. Name,
2. Address,
3. Date of birth,
4. Phone number,
5. Fax number,
6. E-mail address,
7. Social Security number,
8. Photographs,
9. Dates of service (i.e. hospital admission date, date of emergency transport etc.)
10. Location where incident or injury occurred,
11. Any other information that identifies or could be used to identify the individual.

Government officials must be aware of defamation laws, as well. Be careful not to show contempt for, or expose an individual or business to ridicule. At its most basic, libel means injury to reputation and generally statements accusing someone of being a criminal, an adulterer, insane or infected with a loathsome disease are considered "capable of defamatory meaning."

### **Records Requests**

Requests for public records must be made in writing and submitted ONLY to the City Clerk's Office. The City Clerk's Office, under direction of the City Attorney's Office, will advise departments on release of the requested information.

***Note: E-mail is a public record and therefore may be accessible to the news media and general public.***

### **Publications**

**The Communications Department must approve all communications intended for public distribution.** The intention is not to censor, but to ensure the accuracy of information and the best venue for distribution. Additionally, the City has negotiated lower prices with certain vendors for printing and advertising services. Allow 48 hours for the department to review all materials.

**News Releases.** News releases primarily are generated by the Communications Department to gain exposure for the City's programs, services or events. News releases prepared by City departments must be written on approved City of Surprise News Release letterhead, follow Associated Press style, and include a City contact and phone number. Information of a sensitive nature will require City Manager approval.

**News Leads/Photo Opportunities.** Human-interest stories (employee collections, hobbies, experiences), unusual occurrences (a pig comes to council meeting) or events with particular visual appeal (NOT groundbreakings) are of interest to media outlets and are a good opportunity for the City to promote positive news. Contact the Communications Department with story ideas and a few key facts.

**Media Kits.** For major projects or announcements, media kits are an excellent way to disseminate accurate information. The kit typically includes a news release, fact sheet, architectural drawings, maps, charts or photographs.

**Surprise Progress.** This 12-16 page City-produced newsletter is direct-mailed to residents six times per year and includes updates on City projects and City services, as well as City news of interest to the community. Surprise Progress does not accept paid advertising, however, opportunities exist for sponsorships and partnerships. Surprise Progress will not accept news items or promotional messages from outside sources.

**The Scoop.** The employee newsletter is produced by the Communications Department and distributed on-line to all City employees through the City's intranet site *Inside Surprise*.

**Department Newsletters.** To enhance communication with its employees and customers, individual departments are welcome to produce newsletters. However, newsletters should be reviewed by the Communications Department prior to printing and distribution.

**Staff Letters to the Public.** Any staff member preparing a letter to be distributed to more than five residents or businesses must receive approval from the Communications Department prior to distribution. The Communications Department will either approve or suggest changes within 48 hours.

**Collateral Materials.** Brochures, flyers, catalogs and other miscellaneous publications are especially effective for quick explanations of programs and services. Many are used to draw attention to a one-time event. They should be visually interesting and include basic facts: who, what, when, where and possibly, why. The Communications Department will assist with the production of these specialty materials. All materials must be approved by the Communications Department prior to printing and distribution.

**Display Ads.** Used to draw attention to a one-time event or issue. Paid ads have a broader distribution than a flyer, and may target a specific audience. Consult the Communications Department for advice on the best avenue to reach your target audience.

**Legal Ads.** Legal ads are used to inform the public about government actions and proposals, including Planning & Zoning issues, requests for proposals, public hearings, elections, ordinances and more. The Legal Ads are placed in newspapers with paid circulations. Primarily the City Clerk, Community Development Department and Purchasing Division handle Legal Ads.



## **Website**

**Introduction:** The official City of Surprise website ([www.surpriseaz.com](http://www.surpriseaz.com)) is managed and operated by the City of Surprise Communications Department under the direction of the City Webmaster with technical assistance from the Information Technology Department and outside professional consultants. All other web addresses will fall under [www.surpriseaz.com](http://www.surpriseaz.com). Individual departments within the City will not be hosting their own web pages. Vendors will not be permitted to host web pages that attempt to represent themselves as an “official” City of Surprise site. The City website is intended primarily to provide public information concerning City services, activities and policies to promote a positive image for the entire community. It is the exclusive property of the City of Surprise.

**Webmaster:** The Communications Department has a designated webmaster/web developer. In order to keep information consistent throughout the City’s website – all information placed on the website shall first be edited and approved by the City of Surprise webmaster. Only the webmaster, or Information Technology staff members (at the request of the webmaster), may post pages on the City of Surprise website. Individual departments will have publishing rights as directed by the City webmaster.

Webmaster essential duties and responsibilities include the following: Design, creation and management of the City’s website to include graphics, style, content format, color and templates. The webmaster also researches and creates scripting/programming for the website features; makes decisions regarding appropriate content and graphics; designs, programs and creates new interactive forms, and other website pages; updates the City website as required; creates graphics using varied graphics software/applications; and formats photographs and graphics submitted for use on the website.

The webmaster works with representatives from other departments to identify, define and develop website content and creates website presentations; assists with user implementation of web-based applications; identifies and corrects any security and/or web presences issues that is in keeping with a professional “look and feel” of the City’s website; develops policies and standards on website content and generates monthly activity reports and special reports requested by departments.

The webmaster also develops and conducts training on internet use, internet-related City policies, website content and the basic use of graphics software, and serves as a resource to the City’s Website User’s Group.

**Permitted Content:** The webmaster must approve all information, articles, pictures, hyperlinks and other materials prior to being placed on-line. City web pages that contain time-sensitive material that is not updated periodically will be subject to removal. The City of Surprise website does not accept commercial advertising or promotions, however, opportunities exist for sponsorships or partnerships.

**Prohibited Materials:** *Offensive materials;* All postings shall respect the human dignity of all people and shall not contain materials that may reasonably be considered offensive. Such content includes, but is not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, derogatory gender-specific comments or beliefs, national origin or physical attributes. *Political or religious issues;* City of Surprise website pages shall not advocate support or opposition to political candidates, parties or ballot measures at any level of government, or promote any religious beliefs.

**Development and editing:** City staff members of all departments may help in the development of web pages for the City's website. Those pages may be created and sent to the webmaster for editing and publication. At the request of the webmaster, members of the Information Technology Department may assist with the development and/or editing of the City's web pages. When practical, all pages should be designed to meet requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**On-line documents:** Frequently requested documents may be placed on the City of Surprise website. Those include: City Council agendas and minutes, Planning & Zoning Commission agendas and minutes, directory of city phone numbers, demographics, calendar of events and meeting times, press releases, relocation information, tourist and other information.

Links to non-city websites: The City of Surprise permits certain links to other non-city websites to provide greater public access to community information – these external sites will be marked as “Community Resources.” External links will be limited to the following:

- Official government websites including federal, state and local.
- An organization whose website primarily promotes the economic welfare, tourism, volunteerism and industry of Surprise.
- An organization whose website provides recreational, health, public safety, natural disaster or weather information that affects the City of Surprise.
- An organization whose website primarily provides public transportation related information.
- Public educational institutions.
- Local hospitals.
- Local public libraries.
- Utility companies that serve City of Surprise residents.

**Disclaimer:** The City of Surprise does not accept any responsibility for the content of links and reserves the right to refuse or delete any link inconsistent with this policy.

**Copyright:** If the content, graphics, photographs – even the design – of pages were not created by City employees for City use, then an appropriate legal release must be obtained from the content creators or copyright holders. Each page will display the City of Surprise copyright notice. Example: © 2005 City of Surprise, Arizona.

**Format Guidelines:** Website submissions should be in digital format; hardcopy format will only be accepted with prior approval of the City of Surprise webmaster. Desired font for website submittals is 10 point Arial, black.

Graphics, photos, video, music or art must be submitted separately from digital text and must be original art, accompanied by written permission of the copyright holder.

### **Internal E-Mail**

City of Surprise personnel utilize e-mail for a variety of work-related reasons. The primary function of the City's e-mail system is for the exchange of information in a timely or real-time manner. Typically, the Communications Department and/or the City Manager's Office are the sole sources for the distribution of information across the entire organization, especially when the information for distribution is considered *urgent in nature*.

The following policy is established specifically for the purpose of providing direction to City staff regarding the dissemination of information deemed *urgent in nature* across the entire organization via the citywide e-mail distribution list "CoS Employees-All."

It shall be the policy of the City of Surprise to disseminate information *urgent in nature* to the City or the organization via the City's e-mail system. Information deemed *urgent in nature* includes any situation that may cause alarm, affects the health, safety, or welfare of the City as a whole or the daily operations of the organization.

For this purpose, the city shall create a citywide e-mail distribution list named "CoS Employees-All." This citywide distribution list is an effective means to instantly target those City employees whose workstations are connected to the City's e-mail system with a single message.

The Communications Director or designee, shall be responsible for the dissemination of information via CoS Employees-All and is the only authorized position besides the City Manager who may utilize the citywide e-mail distribution list. Prior to the distribution of information via CoS Employees-All, the Communications Director or designee, must review said information with the City Manager and receive approval.

### **Special Projects/Events**

Understanding communication is a key component of any special event or project, the Communications Department should be included in advance planning of all special events and projects (i.e. groundbreaking ceremonies, news conferences, Fourth of July and other holiday celebrations). In addition, the Communications Department is available to consult with each City department to promote City services and programs.

## **Emergency Communications**

In the event of a major crisis or incident, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be established and the Communications Director, Police PIO, Fire PIO, City Manager or Assistant City Manager are designated as City spokespersons. Other people, designated by the Communications Director or City Manager, may serve as spokespersons.

Members of the crisis team will report to the EOC, or other designated location, and the mayor, City Council, and employees will be notified that a crisis or incident exists.

All information regarding the crisis is to be immediately communicated to the crisis management team. No statements will be made to the media until the crisis team has time to assess impact of the crisis. The crisis team through the designated spokesperson will release all information.

Members of the media should be guided to a designated location where they can monitor the crisis and receive regular updates. A City representative should accompany photographers on scene.

Board members and elected officials should not make any statements to the news media until meeting with the crisis team. The mayor should obtain regular briefings from the City Manager and communicate that information to the City Council. However, it is recommended that any statements made to the news media come only through the designated spokesperson. If incorrect or misstated information is released, the legal consequences could be severe. It's the spokesperson's responsibility to ensure the appropriate people on the crisis team clear all outgoing information.

The media may not be satisfied with comments from the official spokesperson, however, that does not mean that others are obligated to comment. City employees who personally disagree with the City's plan for recovery should discuss it behind closed doors, not with the media. It is the spokesperson's job to provide regular updates to employees, as well.

## **Graphics & Style Guide**

City of Surprise government is a single institution with the common goal of serving the residents. Therefore, it is important to maintain a consistent, easily identifiable graphic identity in communicating with our target audience. By standardizing logo applications on equipment, signs, facilities, correspondence, uniforms we enhance the identity and professional image of local government.

The City has a number of registered logos, images and graphics. These images are a matter of public record, but the registered trademark means unauthorized uses may be subject to prosecution.

## Official City Logo



This is the City's official logo that was adopted by the Surprise City Council in June 2002. It is the registered trademark of the City of Surprise.

This logo should appear on all printed materials representing the City, including but not limited to, stationery, business cards, brochures, flyers, banners, vehicles, signs, banners, advertisements, announcements, specialty items and internal and external public communication materials. Along with the City logo, address, contact telephone number, fax number, website address and/or e-mail address should be included when appropriate. Contact the Communications Department for specific applications.

The City's official logo is a registered trademark. City employees may not grant the use of the official logo to outside organizations. Requests for use of the City's official logo must be forwarded to the Communications Department for approval.

The name "Surprise, Arizona" should always be used with the mountain silhouette and sun with the specified Pantone Matching System (PMS) colors – Gold 129, Purple 248, and Black. The font is lapidary 333 bt roman. The official logo includes all of these components and should not be reapportioned or modified in any way.

### Color

To ensure consistency, exact PMS colors are required in all printed materials. When using paint, computer match the PMS colors. When using fabric or paper, match the accepted colors as closely as possible.

### Printing specifications

Heat resistant ink should be used on all printing jobs requiring PMS colors.

## Other Official Logos

The following logos are registered trademarks of the City of Surprise and are currently available for use:



**Flag** Logo: The City of Surprise Flag was designed by a resident, and formally adopted by the City Council in 2001. **Color only.**



**Tag Line:** The optional tag line “Beyond Expectations” was added in 2004. The tag line is ***only*** used in marketing and promotional applications. It is not to be used in place of the official City logo.

## Discontinued Logos

The following logos have been discontinued and should not be used under any circumstances, unless approved by the Communications Department:



**“S” Logo.** Former City Manager Richard McComb designed this City logo in 1992. It was replaced in 2002. Color and black and white.



**Original Logo:** Created when the City of Surprise was incorporated in 1960. Black and white.



**Palm Tree Logo:** Created in 1997. Color and black and white.



**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Logo:** Created in 2000 especially for use during the City’s 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Color and black and white.

## City Motto

In 1998, Surprise adopted the motto, “The Surprise of Arizona.”

In 2000, the City Council and staff informally adopted the slogan, “Live, Work and Play” promoting the vision of Surprise as a well-balanced community offering a variety of housing, job and recreational opportunities.

The City of Surprise is not using a motto at the present time (2005). Departments wanting to adopt an informal motto, must contact the Communications Department prior to its use.

### **Kiosk Signs**

In an effort to keep Surprise streets free of clutter, the City adopted an ordinance outlawing temporary, or "bandit," signs. Instead, the City has instituted a permanent Kiosk sign program. For information on the kiosk signs, contact National Sign Plazas at (800) 972-1234. The City of Surprise recently adopted amendments to its sign ordinance. All signs used by City departments must be approved by the Communications Department and comply with the City's sign ordinance.

### **Construction Signs**

In order to keep the public informed, signs must be erected for any City construction project.

The City's senior management team has approved (2004) the following guidelines:

1. Construction signs for any City project are to be in place before physical construction begins.
2. Signs shall be 8-feet wide by 4-feet deep, made of ¾-inch AC exterior plywood, or other material approved by the City Engineer, or Public Works Director.
3. Background shall be painted white. Letters, numerals and border will be black. The type font shall be Tahoma (bold and regular).
4. Posts shall be painted white. All mounting hardware should be made of rustproof material.
5. Signs shall be placed so that they will not obscure or detract from other signing. A sign shall be placed on each side of the property fronting a City street.
6. A color City logo will be used on all signs.
7. All sign text needs to be approved by Communications Department prior to installation of sign.
8. Construction signs will be removed immediately following the official opening or dedication of the City project.
9. Sign should be attached to two 6-inch by 6-inch white posts.
10. Bottom of sign should be 6-feet above the ground.
11. The sign shall meet all sign code requirements for the site.

Construction Sign details and specifications are available from the Communications Department.

## **POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS**

1. Keep all text and graphics within 1-inch of the computer screen edge.
2. Maps and other documents must be readable from the audience, with a north arrow and some street locations to identify the area easily. If it's not readable don't use it.
3. Retype portions of documents that are illustrative into a larger type size.
4. Do not use a type size smaller than 18 point: 24 point or larger is recommended.
5. Keep the text on each screen short and simple. Bullet points limited to seven words are recommended. This will discourage presenters from reading the presentations.
6. Use color combinations with high contrast, such as dark backgrounds with light text, or light backgrounds with dark text. For example, dark blue background with yellow text. Do not use a bright white background as it tends to bleed on TV. Other high contrast combinations work well.
7. Avoid using bright red for text or backgrounds to prevent blurring. A small amount of bright red, used as underlines and bullets, are appropriate accents.
8. Use graphics (clip art, photos, etc.) in moderation to help break up the text and hold the attention of viewers.

## **Surprise11**

Surprise11 is the City of Surprise's Government Access TV channel. The television station is operated by the City's Communications Department.

All Surprise residents who subscribe to Cox Communications cable TV service may view Surprise11. The station is also viewable by Cox subscribers in Sun City West.

It is the intent of the Communications Department to televise programs appealing to the broadest segments of the City's population within the production capabilities of Surprise11. Requests for television coverage or programming should be made to the Communications Department. Requests from City Council members will be considered equally and on the basis of news value to the community. Final programming decisions will be made by the City Manager.

Surprise11 is committed to providing live and tape-delayed television coverage of Surprise City Council meetings and workshops, within the production capabilities of Surprise11. The station is also committed to providing coverage of Planning and Zoning Commission meetings, within the production capabilities of Surprise11. Requests for coverage of other boards and commissions will be considered on an individual basis. Live or tape-delayed broadcasting of public meetings shall be unedited. Exceptions to this policy shall be when: (a) Technical difficulties interfere with completed program broadcasting; and (b) Excerpts are used as part of another program.

Surprise11 will consider programming produced by outside sources provided it is in good taste and doesn't promote a political candidate or take a position on an election issue. Specifically prohibited is information that promotes candidates for elected office and persons advocating any cause, viewpoint or proposed policy of a partisan nature. Exceptions are forums that give all candidates equal time, elected officials acting in their official capacities and public meetings.



The programming must also be commercial free and relevant to the broadest segments of the City's population. The decision to air a specific program will be made by the City Manager.

Prohibited information/advertising:

- Advertising that promotes the commercial products or services. However, brief credit may be given at the end of a program when assistance has been donated by a commercial or not for profit organization.
- Lottery information, advertisement of lotteries and games of chance for money or prizes. Exemptions are gaming programs sponsored by the City of Surprise.
- Any matter that is legally obscene.
- Any endorsement for or opposition to any consumer product, service or thing.
- Promotional announcements for events, charities, or outside organizations in which the government has no official interest or sponsorship.
- Direct solicitation of anything of value.

### **Surprise City Store**

The Surprise City Store is a marketing and promotional initiative of the Communications Department. The purpose of the store is to promote the City of Surprise through name and logo recognition, and help create a sense of community pride.

The Surprise City Store is managed and operated by the City of Surprise Communications Department. The department is responsible for its presentation, content and pricing structure. It is the goal of the department to generate revenues sufficient to cover the cost of merchandise.

It is the Surprise City Store's policy to offer discounts to City employees and their families.

The Surprise City Store Manager will consider requests for donations of Surprise City Store merchandise to individuals, non-profit organizations or other organizations. A designated internal funding source must be assured before the donation of any merchandise. Costs for donated merchandise must cover the City's costs for the item(s).

## **Addendums**

### **General Tips for Media Interviews**

- ❑ In order to properly prepare, ask the reporter in advance about the nature of the interview and key questions. Review potential questions, develop key messages or points, and practice responses.
- ❑ Provide written materials when possible or type up a fact sheet emphasizing your main points. Written materials often provide good background information, and may reduce the possibility of misunderstanding.
- ❑ Remember, the interview is not a conversation with a reporter, but with the reporter's readers, listeners or viewers, so speak from the perspective of what will interest the public and best represent the views of the City.
- ❑ Pause to think before you speak - even on camera.
- ❑ Information should *always* be completely accurate and truthful.
- ❑ Never divulge confidential information, or speak "off the record." Don't say anything you don't want to see in print.
- ❑ Answer questions directly with short, clear, quotable phrases. Comment only on issues which you have personal knowledge or expertise. Refer reporters to other sources when appropriate.
- ❑ If you don't know the answer say, "I don't know," then offer to find out. If you know the answer, but can't reveal it, state why.
- ❑ Avoid using technical jargon.
- ❑ Don't be defensive or sarcastic.
- ❑ Emphasize your main points often.
- ❑ Avoid answering, "No comment." Instead, say...
  - "I can't answer that, as it's still being investigated/evaluated..."
  - "It's simply too early to determine what the next step/outcome will be..."
  - "For me to guess/speculate/predict what is going to happen would be inappropriate..."
  - "That's an interesting question, but let me remind you..."
  - "What's important to remember, however..."
  - "Let me give you some background information..."
  - "I'm not the one to answer that question/speak to that subject, but if you'll give me your name and phone number, I'll try to have someone get in touch with you..."
- ❑ Ask for the reporter's business card and details about when and where the story will appear. Don't ask to review the story before publication.
- ❑ Invite the reporter to call for additional information or clarification.
- ❑ Realize mistakes and misunderstandings are fairly common. If a story contains an inaccuracy or misquote (depending on the magnitude of the error) contact the PIO for help in determining whether to:
  - a. Ask for a correction in the next edition.
  - b. Let the reporter know about the error so he/she won't make the same mistake again. Reporters often repeat information in future articles.
  - c. Write a letter to the editor clarifying the city's position.

- d. Talk to the reporter's editor if mistakes occur frequently.

## **General Tips for Television**

- ❑ Don't look at the camera.
- ❑ Always assume you are on camera.
- ❑ Practice good posture. Sit up straight, lean forward slightly toward the microphone, and don't swivel or rock the chair.
- ❑ Keep movements to a minimum.
- ❑ Avoid chewing gum or eating. Use clear mugs for drinks instead of Styrofoam cups or soft drink cans.
- ❑ Avoid wearing white, high contrast colors, checks, stripes and fabric with high sheen or busy patterns. Pastel colors and dark suits or dresses are best.
- ❑ Remove wallets, glasses, pens and other items from pockets. Don't wear nametags.
- ❑ Don't button jackets and pull coats down in back.
- ❑ Television lights have a tendency to wash out complexions and accentuate five o'clock shadow. Men should be freshly shaven and women should wear makeup slightly heavier than normal.

## **Audio Tips**

- ❑ Assume your microphone is always on and every sound can be heard. Avoid making comments you don't want heard on the air.
- ❑ Position yourself eight to 12 inches from the microphone and speak directly into it. Speak with normal pitch and volume.
- ❑ Remove any loose fitting jewelry that may bang against the dais and cause distracting noise.